

(12) INTERNATIONAL APPLICATION PUBLISHED UNDER THE PATENT COOPERATION TREATY (PCT)

(19) World Intellectual Property
Organization
International Bureau



543 096

(43) International Publication Date
5 August 2004 (05.08.2004)

PCT

(10) International Publication Number
WO 2004/066163 A1

(51) International Patent Classification⁷: **G06F 17/30**

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(21) International Application Number:
PCT/GB2004/000310

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(22) International Filing Date: 23 January 2004 (23.01.2004)

(25) Filing Language: English

(81) Designated States (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of national protection available*): AE, AG, AL, AM, AT, AU, AZ, BA, BB, BG, BR, BW, BY, BZ, CA, CH, CN, CO, CR, CU, CZ, DE, DK, DM, DZ, EC, EE, EG, ES, FI, GB, GD, GE, GH, GM, HR, HU, ID, IL, IN, IS, JP, KE, KG, KP, KR, KZ, LC, LK, LR, LS, LT, LU, LV, MA, MD, MG, MK, MN, MW, MX, MZ, NA, NI, NO, NZ, OM, PG, PH, PL, PT, RO, RU, SC, SD, SE, SG, SK, SL, SY, TJ, TM, TN, TR, TT, TZ, UA, UG, US, UZ, VC, VN, YU, ZA, ZM, ZW.

(26) Publication Language: English

(30) Priority Data:
0301721.7 24 January 2003 (24.01.2003) GB
0309460.4 25 April 2003 (25.04.2003) GB

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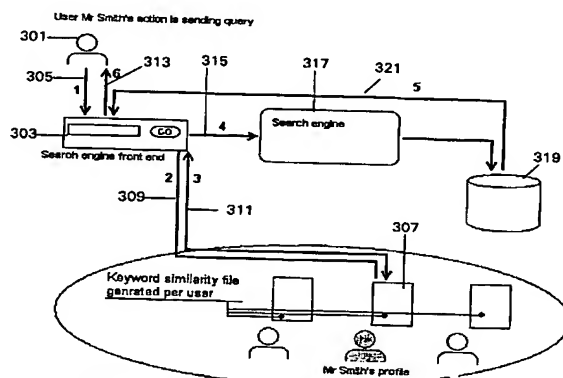
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(84) Designated States (*unless otherwise indicated, for every kind of regional protection available*): ARIPO (BW, GH, GM, KE, LS, MW, MZ, SD, SL, SZ, TZ, UG, ZM, ZW), Eurasian (AM, AZ, BY, KG, KZ, MD, RU, TJ, TM), European (AT, BE, BG, CH, CY, CZ, DE, DK, EE, ES, FI, FR, GB, GR, HU, IE, IT, LU, MC, NL, PT, RO, SE, SI, SK,

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(54) Title: **SEARCHING APPARATUS AND METHODS**



- 1: User sends query
- 2: User "related keyword" profile is read and additional Boolean keywords are extracted
- 3: The user is given the Boolean terms to expand his query
- 4: The expanded query can go to a search engine (one that can handle Boolean querying)
- 5: The set of result is extracted from the data repository
- 6: The Graphical User Interface displays the results back to the user

(57) Abstract: An apparatus and method are provided for improving database searching, the method comprising the steps of: receiving a search query comprising one or more search keywords from a user; accessing a user profile means arranged to provide data indicative of relatedness criteria between keywords from a set of documents, and identifying from said user profile means, for the or each search keyword, potentially-related keywords according to predetermined criteria; providing said potentially-related keywords to the user; receiving information from the user confirming that any potentially-related keywords are considered to be related potentially-related keywords as keywords in an improved search query; and submitting the improved search query to a search engine. Also provided are an apparatus and method for creating and maintaining user profiles for use in the above searching apparatus and method.

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TR), OAPI (BF, BJ, CF, CG, CI, CM, GA, GN, GQ, GW, ML, MR, NE, SN, TD, TG).

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Published:

- *with international search report*
- *before the expiration of the time limit for amending the claims and to be republished in the event of receipt of amendments*